

*Postcolonial Spaces: the Politics of Place in Contemporary Culture*. Andrew Teverson and Sara Upstone (Eds.). London: Palgrave MacMillan 2011.

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Setting the tone for a highly theoretical, yet very accessible book, Edward Soja writes the foreword to this timely edited collection. Reminding us of Said's spatial theorizations and that no one is in fact free from 'the struggle over geography', Soja traces the intersections between postcolonial studies and human geography: 'there has been a long-standing and mutually rewarding relationship' (ix). *Postcolonial Spaces* is a landmark study which fully develops this relationship; postcolonialism is intimately connected with space, after all colonialism was also a geographical project. The 'spatial turn' explored in this book brings together two major strands of postcolonial scholarship, both literary criticism and geography.

The book with its eleven chapters breaks new grounds; taking as point of reference Soja's *Thirdspace* (1996) – defined by the editors as a 'spatial renaissance' – and Bhabha's concern with *location* (and *thirdspace*) it locates human phenomena in a spatial, rather than solely temporal framework. Further, Foucault's extensive work on spatialization also functions as a philosophical stepping stone of this innovative collection. *Postcolonial Spaces* successfully bridges 'the gulf [...] between textual analysis and the dynamic contributions to postcolonial thought being made in the discipline of geography' (5).

The first four chapters explore postcolonial spatiality through literary criticism. An investigation of Carly Phillips' writing about north of England (chapter one), as a postcolonial northern heterotopia, is echoed in chapter three's analysis of Jamaica Kincaid's 'spatial praxis' where the garden is conceived – in true heterotopic spirit – as a space of 'rumination and regenerative resistance [...] a complex ecology for spatial reproduction.' (40) Chapter two discusses the postcolonial resistance in a Peter Carey's short story where the map becomes an inadequate approximation of reality, 'a jumble of meaningless codes' (34); cartography and colonial discourse are further developed in chapter nine. While chapter four explores gendered spaces in the postcolonial context, chapter five marks a shift of focus on cultural studies and geography by addressing the politics of postcolonial space in relation to the female body in Monica Ali's *Brick Lane*.

The following chapters provide a refreshing perspective on migrancy and diaspora and lead the way into issues of security, territoriality and sovereignty teased out in chapter ten – an analysis of Foucault's 1978 lecture course which explicitly deals with empire. The imbrication of the imperial and the urban in spatial dimension is taken further in the last chapter 'Geography of theory' which addresses the territorialisation of theory in an increasingly aggressively corporate university system: the cultural geographies of theories result from 'residual asymmetries of power emerging from both colonialism and neo-colonialism' (167).

The burgeoning of new hegemonic forms in an age of accelerating demand for space – as Foucault anticipated – calls for new geographies of resistance in the globalized, postcolonial present. Thus, *Postcolonial Spaces* offers an unprecedented exploration of critical spatial perspectives far from epistemological inhibitions; a highly nuanced and impeccably researched book, it shakes the allegedly firm grounds of critical praxis in the global landscape of academia and offers a prime example of genuinely interdisciplinary scholarship.

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